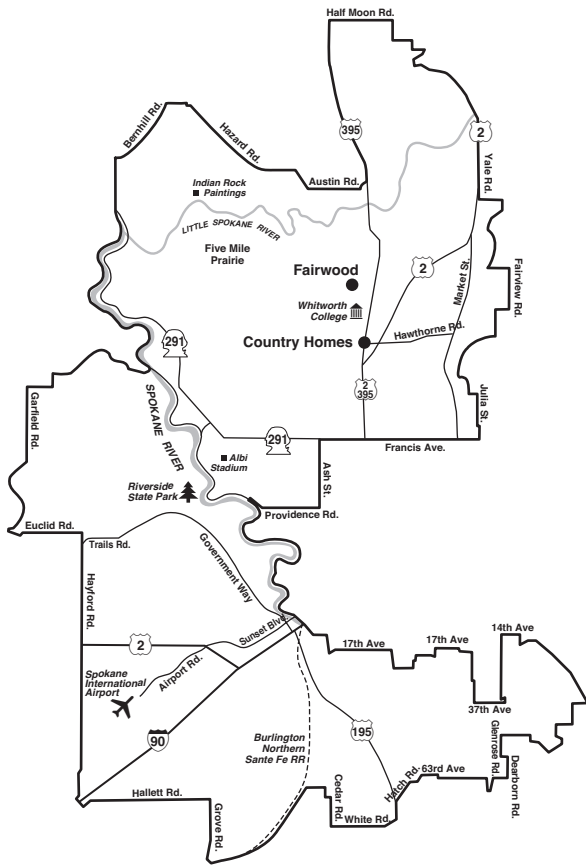


STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# KEVIN PARKER

6th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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- Financial Institutions and Insurance (Assistant Ranking)
- Community and Economic Development and Trade

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# KEVIN PARKER

6th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

## 2009 SESSION REVIEW

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The Legislature adjourned April 26, and it is great to be home again with my family and amongst all of you. There were some successes and some setbacks during this year’s 105-day session.

The massive budget deficit dominated most of the work in Olympia. While the session ended with a temporarily balanced budget, the reality is that there were more than 40 new taxes and fees brought in front of the Legislature. Approximately 54 percent of the budget was balanced with one-time dollars used for on-going programs, which means budget problems were postponed, but not solved.

Like so many of you, I desire a stronger education system and a vibrant economy that creates new jobs. This year, I supported the most comprehensive education reform since the 1990’s and continued to vote against new taxes. I also worked with the community to fight for \$250,000 for a right turn lane on Highway 195 at the Cheney-Spokane Road to prevent further deaths like the recent tragic loss of young Lorissa Greene. I helped to stop many of the bills that would have hindered job creation, and in some cases, increased your utility bills.

During session, I hosted three town hall meetings throughout Spokane and another town hall over the phone while I was in Olympia. Your feedback is essential to my job representing you.

Please visit my Web site and sign up to receive my electronic newsletters. I have opened a district office downtown to better connect with you. Please feel free to come by the office, call or e-mail any time you need help navigating through government, have ideas or questions about state issues, or just want to say “hi!”

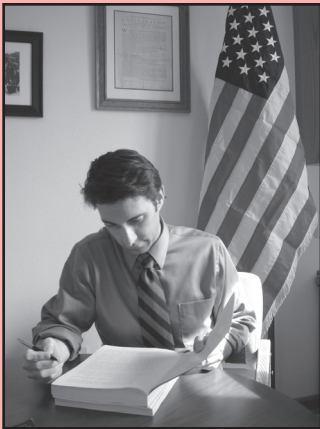
It is truly an honor to serve as your voice in Olympia. I remain convinced that the best days in Spokane are yet to come.

Warmly,

Kevin Parker  
6th District State Representative  
Parker.Kevin@leg.wa.gov  
(509) 455-7225



BUDGET



The final budget was more than 500 pages, and legislators had less than 24 hours to review this document and make an informed decision!

Coming into the beginning of the session in January, our state was facing a \$6 billion shortfall. When the budget proposal was released toward the end of session, that deficit had increased to \$9 billion. Our state had a real challenge. But it was also an opportunity to reform state government and stand for our priorities — like education, public safety and transportation. I voted against using \$5 billion in one-time dollars for ongoing programs and services. I believe we should have taken advantage of this opportunity and lived within our means. I voted against the final operating budget because I’m concerned we will end up in two years right back where we started.

EDUCATION

A task force of legislators and educators discussed for two years how to reform the funding of education. This year they introduced legislation to do just that by expanding the definition of basic education required to be funded under our state constitution. I supported House Bill 2261 which would have added early learning, special education and bus transportation to basic education funding by the state, as well as allow for extended hours of instruction for middle and high school students. The bill would also empower educators to identify performance-based measures and encourage peer review. Recently the governor signed the bill, but



Chatting with constituents at one of my town halls in March.

she vetoed one of the most important provisions for early learning. This is quite a disappointment. Aside from this, the bill will provide a blueprint for the state to do what it should have all along: fully fund education.

That is why I also co-sponsored House Bill 1657, the “Fund Education First” bill, which would ensure our kids’ education needs are met before the Legislature spends money in other places. Unfortunately, the bill was not given a hearing and died in committee. I will continue to push for this legislation, because I believe it is the right thing to do for our kids and our state’s future.

TRANSPORTATION

Though funding is running short in the transportation budget, which is dependent on gas taxes and licensing fees, Spokane benefitted in a couple of areas in the two-year budget.

Lorissa Greene, a 16-year-old with a bright future, lost her life at the intersection of Highway 195 and Cheney-Spokane Road in January. Her mother, Debi Hammel, courageously came to Olympia to turn a tragic story into a positive change for our community. Lorissa’s collision was not the first at this intersection. In the last five years, almost 30 collisions have occurred as a result of oncoming traffic. After hearing from Debi and her neighbors, I joined my colleagues in the House and Senate to push for funding a solution that will make travel safer for neighbors. Placing a right

turn lane on this stretch of highway will hopefully eliminate a dangerous blind spot in the near-term for those crossing the highway. I worked with a colleague to introduce an amendment to the final transportation budget which included \$250,000 for this project and am proud that it was adopted. We will continue to work for long-term solutions to the traffic problems at this and other locations along Highway 195, but I am very pleased at the work already done to dramatically reduce accidents at this dangerous intersection.

We all know how important the North-South freeway will be to commuters, travelers and freight mobility in Spokane and beyond. While it has been difficult to get continued funding for this project, I supported an additional \$28 million

provided in the transportation budget for design and land acquisition for the next segment of the project from Francis Avenue to the Spokane River. It is important for the state to fulfill the promises made in transportation and complete this vital economic infrastructure project. I am committed to continuing the fight for our region’s interests in the Legislature. Funding and completing the North-South corridor is paramount.

